

# THE LEISURE HOUR.

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"BEHOLD IN THESE WHAT LEISURE HOURS DEMAND,—AMUSEMENT AND TRUE KNOWLEDGE HAND IN HAND."—*Cooper.*



VIOLET IS LET INTO A SECRET.

## THE HEIRESS OF CHEEVELY DALE.

BY MRS. PROSSER.

### CHAPTER XLVII.—A CHANGE AT THE RECTORY.

It was arranged the next morning that Mr. Boyce should proceed with his servants to Cheevely Dale, and that the rector should return to Balla. In the long and deeply interesting conversation that had occupied them before this was settled, the rector, slow as he was to detect a flaw in any but himself, perceived that, although a mighty change had indeed been wrought in his brother-in-law, the same overbearing tendencies existed, and the same impatience of contradiction. There was,

indeed, a different way of stating an opinion and of maintaining it; but a strong savour of John Boyce of old prevailed notwithstanding. Yet he with lofty generosity had forbidden the rector to dwell with self-condemnation on the past, entirely acquitting him of the neglect and culpable indolence with which he charged himself, saying, "We have been taught that the past needs pardon, my brother. We have both the hope that we are forgiven; let us freely forgive one another!" And it was plain he harboured no resentment against the rector, though his face wore something of its old cloud when the seducers of the lad were alluded to.

"But—for myself—am I not the same man, every exertion costing me a struggle, prone to lie down vanquished under every call to self-sacrifice? Ah! it is slow work, this crucifying of the flesh! We may well bear with one another!" Thus ruminated the rector, while recalling and analysing the impressions the morning had left on him. Yet some of the joy he had experienced, that a meeting he had so much dreaded had passed in peace, evaporated, and a sense of freedom, akin to that he had felt in old times, stole on him when he had taken his last leave of his brother-in-law, and was in his chaise for Balla.

Gandy had exhausted his ingenuity in preparing for his master's return. Never had a brighter fire blazed on his hearth. And for supper he had accumulated all he could find in Balla. Happily for nurse's peace, the kitchen fire burnt brightly too. There was no one-sided shadow to betoken a speedy removal; and right glad was Gandy to take his proper offices, and abdicate one whose duties had increasingly perplexed him, in spite of his hearty goodwill, the longer he held it. Nurse, when she proceeded to take a survey of culinary implements, declared, however, that she could find little but the fixtures, so marvellously had he burnt, broken, or sent on pilgrimage all he had used.

"Poor Gandy! men do not know how to handle such things," was all the rector said in reply to nurse's complaint and request that he would come and see the invalidated or defunct kitchen appliances; but a *carte blanche* to her to refit all at her discretion restored her spirits. And as to Gandy, when told the issue of her appeal, he was on higher stilts than ever—he was a man! He took easily all the respect and consideration that he now received from nurse and Biddy, who followed in due time, returning it with ceremonious politeness, attaching such high value to the notice of his master that all below it seemed unimportant, and only in the nature of things. But a wondrous change had taken place in that lonely life of scorn, and neglect, and loneliness; and it was the talk of Balla that since his aunt had gone he had "shown himself."

Indeed, a more peaceable, respectable, and harmonious household than the rectory now displayed could not be seen. The kitchen was no longer the resort of the profligate, but the scene of industry and charity, in which the aims of the rector were well dispensed, and worth in want found a cordial welcome, shelter, and relief. And very soothing was the conviction of the change that had taken place to Mr. Goldison, who had often, for comfort's sake, refused to listen to Mr. Marveldine, or to indulge suspicions which, in spite of his blindness, would sometimes force themselves on him.

If nurse had found it difficult to set to rights the kitchen, the rector found it far more arduous to reduce to order the work of a parish in which neglect had so guiltily reigned. But, if his labour was heavy and difficult, he had One to help him who was able and willing to supply his need; and the constant obligation he was under to apply to Him was the happiest circumstance of his case. Formerly he had clung to Mr. Marveldine for all things; the lowest stile in his daily journey he must help him over, so he had thought: now he found the inefficiency of all but One for guidance, and He was always at hand, and ever the nearer when the most wanted.

The marriage of May Marveldine had so engrossed her father's time and thoughts that it was well for the rector he had no urgent want of him.

"Goldison is so much better than he was," Mr.

Marveldine would say, "he can spare me a little; but I will go and see him as soon as all this is over."

But an appointment came for Hugh, and that occupied him till he felt almost ashamed, as he said, to show his face at the rectory.

How neat the yard was as he trotted in! It was mid-winter, when all things, especially near the sea, look cheerless; but so scrupulously clean it was. The pumps, comfortably wrapped up in their straw bands, seemed aware of the improvement within. Almost before he had arrived at the "lighting stone," as it was called, on which females (who in those days were used to ride on pillions) mounted, Gandy, spruce and upright, came from the stable where he had been polishing Jock, to take the pony.

"Why, Gandy, you are a head taller than when last I saw you," said Mr. Marveldine.

Gandy didn't approve of being reminded of old times. He had no idea of a butterfly being taunted with his grub experience; so he merely led away the pony, with an air he had seen the ostler at the market town practise, as he took away the horses of customers to the inn.

"No loungers about—that's good!" thought Mr. Marveldine, using his privilege of intimacy to go into the kitchen entrance, that he might leave his over-coat, wet with the rimy rain that had fallen, to dry by the fire.

He stood back on entering. A circle of aged men and women were on the settle and benches ranged round the ample hearth, and a fragrant vapour of soup curled up from the large bowl from which nurse was ladling into their basins.

"A dinner-party, I see," he exclaimed; "then I'll leave my coat in the hall, and you'll dry it presently."

Nurse assured him the company would leave in twenty minutes. "They have half by the fire, to warm them, sir, and the rest they take home in their cans," she said, while Biddy meekly stood outside the group, filling the cans and cutting up bread.

"And how often is this done?" asked Mr. Marveldine.

"Every Wednesday, sir, as regular as the day and clock can make it."

Forbidding any rising, or other testimony of respect, Mr. Marveldine, passing through by the road he so well knew, paused in the inner kitchen, which had been Mrs. Slipley's room. He looked at the window through which he had so inopportunistically discovered her, and mused as he ascended the staircase to the study on her probable fate. He found the rector at his writing-table; he received him with a cheerful smile.

"How very kind to come in such weather as this, when you have so much to do!" he cried.

"Now that's very pleasant. I expected a wry face at least, and a faint scolding at any rate."

"What for?" asked the rector, in surprise.

"Why, for being so long away."

"Is it so long?" asked Mr. Goldison, trying to recollect.

"It would have been once; but you seem to have got to running alone in good earnest."

"Why, time goes so very fast; and there is so much to be done," said the rector, in an apologising tone, for he thought his friend seemed a little hurt by his easy taking of his absence.

"Oh, I'm too glad, too glad to find it so," replied Mr. Marveldine. "I've not come empty-handed; I've got, at last, that scarce edition which we thought out of possibility to obtain. A friend helped me; it is costly, but I told him you wouldn't regard price." As he

spoke he took a volume from his pocket, and placed it in the rector's hands.

"You are too good to me," said Mr. Goldison, taking the volume, but laying it down with a slight glance; "but you are cold—you must be. Biddy will bring you a luncheon, and we shall fare better at dinner than when we sat down to Gandy's wonderful fowl."

There was nothing strained, nothing very remarkable in the rector's manner, and yet through his whole visit Mr. Marveldine could see he was an altered man. Occasionally he would become abstracted, but the distress which had so long drawn lines on his face had disappeared; his smile was more frequent, and his manner often playful.

"Goldison, I congratulate you. You are well served now, I believe; and it has given you back twenty years," he said, as he was preparing for his road homewards.

"My friend," said the rector, "I never was so happy in my life."

"No, I dare say not; servants are the making or bane of comfort generally."

"Servants! My servants do not make my happiness," said the rector.

"No, but they help; and your peaceable condition with John Boyce, and Rosalie's comfort, and their taking Cheevely and its concerns off your hands, altogether account for it."

"No, believe me," said the rector, holding both the hands of his friend, and looking earnestly in his face; "these are blessings, and I am thankful for them, but my happiness has another source."

Mr. Marveldine looked steadily at him.

"I believe in the forgiveness of sins, the resurrection of the body, and the life everlasting," said the rector, with emotion.

"So do I, man," said Mr. Marveldine, almost provoked at so simple an assertion; for he had begun to fancy that, forgetting his old attachment, the rector had allowed his affections once more to settle on a bride.

"Then you are happy, as I am," returned Mr. Goldison, scarcely able to repress a sigh at the rebuff his friend's manner, so contrary to his words, conveyed; while Mr. Marveldine continued—"And I always supposed you did, too, or I shouldn't have considered you a proper person for your post."

"I never was—you didn't know it, and I didn't know it, but I was not, for I did not believe, in the way I now do, the Gospel I had taken vows to preach."

"Nonsense, nonsense!" said Mr. Marveldine, somewhat moodily. "Don't overstate things. You may be advanced in religion by all that is past, and I'm glad you are, for it has done you and the parish a world of good. But you were all right before—only a little sleepy."

"I was a dumb dog—a faithless shepherd," said the rector, firmly.

"Very well; be it so. Then there's no trusting anybody, for you imposed yourself on me for a very good Christian."

"Then I did it in ignorance, believe me," said the rector, sorrowfully.

"Have your own way. So long as you are happy, I won't quarrel with anything that brings it."

That evening, as Mr. Marveldine waited for the pony, he turned over all he had seen and heard in his mind, and thus gave his verdict:—

"He's the best fellow I know, or ever knew; but soft he always was. Why can't he talk rationally? One loses one's respect for a man when he bounces out with such wholesale assertions. And now, he will be going

head and ears out of himself, as he used to go into himself. There's no medium—no moderation with these visionary men. I question if John Boyce will hold long on such a road, even though he has begun on it. Holloa, Gandy, my good fellow!" he cried, as Gandy was giving the last touch to the horse, "bring him out. I haven't had one of your fowls for dinner, so I must make haste home to supper, you see."

Gandy did not quite relish the joke, but it was made more palatable by the full praise he got for his grooming; and the shilling in his hand was very acceptable, in spite of the reflection on his cookery.

The rector, as he heard the loud crack of the riding-whip reverberate through the cliffs, felt a yearning love for his friend he had never experienced before. Had he ignorantly and unwisely spoken to offend him? Well, so ignorant and unwise he was, that it was more than possible. But there was a remedy; and earnestly did he plead that light from the same source that had gladdened his own heart might illumine that of one so dear to him.

#### CHAPTER XLVIII.—A YOUNG CONFIDANTE.

MR. VIVIAN frequently renewed his visit to Tredorvan. More than a year passed in search for a place, but to each suggested by Mr. Winkler some objection was started, not by him, but by Mr. Boyce, as it seemed, though the demur might, on consideration, generally be traced to him. There was no want of earnestness in the search; and, as the difficulty became greater, his anxiety to obtain what he wanted seemed to increase.

One morning Violet came in tears to Mrs. Boyce, saying that uncle Vivian (so familiar had she become with him) was going away.

"No, not yet," said Mrs. Boyce; "we expect my brother and his friend Mr. Marveldine by the evening coach; you must stay to meet them."

"Well, I will try and arrange," said the guest. "Violet shall come and help me to write my letter."

Gladly did the child consent; and, lovingly holding his hand, followed him to his room. He opened his desk as if to write, but allowed her to ask a thousand questions, as she sat on his knee watching all he did. He looked thoughtfully into her dark sparkling eyes, and said, "You ought not to have been called Violet, with those eyes."

"Tell me a pretty name for me, uncle," she replied.

"Oh! there are many pretty names—Mary, and Martha, and Bessie, and Helen," he said.

"There was Helen Tredorvan," she said, quickly catching up his words.

"Was there?"

"Yes. I don't know who she was, but I heard them say so," said the child, confidentially.

"Perhaps she was your mother," suggested her companion.

"My mother?" exclaimed the child, as though it had struck her for the first time that she knew nothing of a mother.

"Yes, perhaps she was. Have they never told you so?"

"No," said Violet, shaking her head.

"Then don't tell any one that I told you," he said, in a half-whisper.

The little lips were compressed with firm determination.

"And was your father a Mr. Tredorvan?" he asked, watching her face.

"My father?" she cried; and her thoughts ranged from Mr. Marveldine to Mr. Goldison; then suddenly she added, "Who is my father?"



He kissed her as he said, "Isn't good Mr. Boyce your father?"

"No!" said Violet, very decidedly.

"Nor Mr. Marveldine?"

"No, not now; aunt Boyce told me so," she said.

"Nor Mr. Goldison?"

"Is he? I love uncle Goldison," she cried.

Mr. Vivian stooped down as if going to write, and did not answer; but, soon raising himself, said, "Do you want to know very much?"

"Very much!" cried Violet, her eyes flashing with animation.

"And can you keep a secret, little as you are?" he asked.

"Yes, I can—I *will*!" she said, proudly.

"And you will tell no one what I tell you?"

"No one—*no one*," she cried, earnestly.

"I am your father!" he said, folding her in his arms.

"But now, Violet," he added, when he had recovered himself, "remember, if you tell this you will never see me again, for they want to take your father from you. They don't know me, or they wouldn't let me be here."

The child was mute with astonishment. She fixed her eyes on him, as if trying to take in the meaning of his words.

"Violet, if I had not had confidence in you, I would not have trusted you. Will you keep your father's secret?"

Tears gushed to her eyes as she clasped his neck in her little arms.

"I am going away to-day," he continued, "but I will come again very soon. And you will not forget me? you will love your father, and long to see me again?"

She replied by new caresses.

On their return to the drawing-room, he declared that even with Violet's help he had not been able to find a proper excuse for disregarding the summons he had had home, and that he must leave directly.

"What a pity that we had not told him sooner of their coming! he might then have arranged," said Mrs. Boyce.

Mr. Boyce thought he had mentioned it the day before; he had intended doing so.

Violet could hardly restrain her tears at his departure, and the weight of the secret he had committed to her was a heavy burden. She feared to speak lest she should betray it; she watched her words anxiously, and sat with her doll in the deep window-seat that evening as if watching for her "uncle Goldison's" chaise, but in reality meditating on the mighty fact that Helen Tredorvan was her mother, and that Mr. Vivian was her father. When would he come again? When might they all be told? She wished it might be very, very soon; but, until the time came, would she tell the secret? Her brow contracted at the thought.

"How silent that child is!" remarked Mrs. Boyce to her husband, as, from a distant part of the room, she watched her in the window.

"She is thinking of her friends and their arrival," he replied.

Mrs. Boyce thought her look did not betoken joy, and that neither her friends nor her doll had a place in her mind. "I believe she is thinking of Mr. Vivian," she replied.

"He has contrived certainly to make her very fond of him; but I hear wheels;" and he started up, the chaise was on the drive, but Violet was so absent she had not noticed its approach.

Her deep affection for Mr. Goldison for a time brought her back to her old self, and his increased cheerfulness

made him more than ever attractive; but every now and then, when not excited or diverted by his kindness, or Mr. Marveldine's remarks, she would relapse into absence, and was glad when night came, and she was sent to her room.

"I really think that child has begun to behave rather strangely since she has discovered that she is lady of this place," said Mr. Marveldine.

"She is certainly older," said Mr. Goldison, "but as simple and affectionate as ever."

But other topics soon displaced the little heiress. Mrs. Boyce was much struck with the cheerful deportment of her brother; and it was a solace indeed, under all she still suffered on account of her child, to see the union that appeared to exist between him and her husband.

Mr. Boyce without reserve related some of the circumstances that had led to the change in his opinions and feelings. Mr. Marveldine fidgeted a little occasionally, thinking the relation savoured too much of "I, myself, I;" but the rector listened with interest, and had respect to the wheat while the chaff he disregarded.

During the conversation Mr. Boyce spoke with freedom of his affairs, also frequently alluding to his overseer, who had risen from being book-keeper to manage the estate.

"How long has he been with you?" inquired Mr. Marveldine.

"Hammond? Some years now. He is so disinterested, so acute, so painstaking, I can trust him with the whole as if I were there myself. He was raw and inexperienced when he came first under my hand: I have made him what he is; he is devoted to my interests. There is but one thing in which we differ: I allow him to argue as on equal ground, but I cannot convince him I am right; yet—"

"What is that?" asked Mr. Marveldine.

"The necessity of generosity in the treatment of negroes. My judgment goes with emancipation. I have little doubt that free labour will work better and cheaper in the end, and, but that I have resolved to part with the whole property, I should make some arrangement with my slaves. As it is, I let Hammond, who hates the notion of it, have his way."

"I wouldn't trust a man who stood in the road of generosity to men and freedom to slaves," said Mr. Marveldine, stoutly. "Would you?" he asked, turning to the rector.

Mr. Goldison bowed his head in agreement, but Mr. Boyce replied somewhat loftily that he knew how to make allowance for prejudices, although he would certainly discontinue slavery on the ground of conscience if he retained the plantations.

"Nay, but for conscience' sake why not free it from the curse of slavery before you sell it? Why transfer the guilt to another?" asked Mr. Marveldine, warmly.

"I should not have time to bring things round; all would be in confusion, and of course the value of the estate would be greatly impaired," Mr. Boyce replied, somewhat stiffly.

"What of that? Sell it for half, sell it for less; but don't go against conscience in profiting by such inhuman practices!"

"You are not aware, Mr. Marveldine, that slaves well treated are happier far than many who are free."

"No; nor will I ever believe that it is so. I can understand a man without a conscience, and making no claim to one, trafficking in human beings; but when it comes to religious profession—don't be angry, John, excuse an old friend—and selling bodies with living souls in them, why, I am at fault entirely!"

Mr. Marveldine spoke with some heat. Mr. Boyce drew up and bowed stiffly; he was in his own house; besides, he had made some slight vaunt of having conquered a hasty spirit; but his face darkened, and his wife trembled for the effects of Mr. Marveldine's ill-judged rashness.

After a silent pause of some seconds, Mr. Boyce said coldly, "Far be it from me to lord it over any man's opinion; I hope we can allow each other to retain what we hold without collision."

"No, John, no," said Mr. Marveldine, who was struck with the self-command he had shown, and more interested in him on account of it than before. "You must not be offended at my freedom; I am a great deal too short in wit and long in tongue. But your brother here has spoilt me: he has allowed me to have my way without check, so we have never come to grief; there must be two to a quarrel, and he *can't* quarrel!"

"Nor will I willingly," said Mr. Boyce, whose good-humour was restored by the frankness of his opponent's manner.

"Well, then; now, without heat, you know, let us argue this matter over, and the rector shall be judge, whether, after your profession of an increased knowledge of truth, you can consistently remain a slave-holder for the purpose of selling those slaves to others."

Mr. Boyce rather shrank from the contest, but Mr. Marveldine wouldn't allow him to retreat, and long and closely did they argue. The rector, whose mind required no argument to make it up, had long left their company and conversation in spirit, and was first roaming over his parish, then recalling the past, vividly brought before him by the scarcely altered apartment and those deep recesses in which he had so often sat with her whom he had last beheld sleeping in death.

He started as if from a cannon's mouth when Mr. Marveldine cried out—

"Your verdict! I think we have come to the last point of summing up."

"Oh—verdict—yes——" cried Mr. Goldison, looking quite bewildered, and rather alarmed.

"I knew it, I knew it!" said Mr. Marveldine. "I was sure he had left those folded arms and knitted brows as lights are put in empty houses to cheat thieves; he has been on his travels from first to last, and we might as well have kept our eloquence to ourselves."

"I am very sorry, really very sorry, but my opinion could not be influenced by anything said," he replied, much disconcerted.

"No, Theophilus! and what is your opinion?" asked Mr. Boyce.

"Dead against you," said Mr. Marveldine for him; and the rector did not contradict him.

"Well; I hope we have argued for the truth, and that true conviction with both will follow," said Mr. Boyce, who looked thoughtfully at the rector, and the conversation closed.

The whole of Mr. Boyce's forbearance had exhausted itself during the debate. He was secretly angry with Mr. Marveldine for arguing with him at all; but chiefly for having convinced him, against his will, that he was wrong. He maintained his courtesy, however; but the uncompromising guest felt that the cordiality of his welcome was gone.

"Talk about truth with these fellows!" he said to himself, as he took a sharp walk up and down the avenue to get an appetite for breakfast the next morning. "Why, they take hold of a little visionary truth, but reduce the thing to practice, and they start off. Now

the rector is of another sort. He sticks to his text; but as to John Boyce! Well, look at home; it's no business of mine; only when people make such a to-do, one expects it to be not quite mountain-and-mouse work."

"Any commands for friend Winkler?" he asked, when breakfast was over. "I have business speedy and weighty with him, that will make me cut short my visit to you. Where is our little duchess? I have not noticed her this morning." Violet had breakfasted in the room, but had kept her place close by the rector; and her voice, seldom loud, had not been heard at all.

"Come, my little quondam daughter, you and I were well enough acquainted not so long ago," he said, lifting her slender form to bestow on her a fatherly caress.

Mr. Goldison noticed that she shrank from him, and, not being aware that it was from being saluted "daughter," as she did not understand the qualifying term *quondam*, was vexed to see it. But Mr. Marveldine was too busy with greater people and things to see anything. He put her down, and, patting her head a little roughly, told her to be good and do her bringing up credit, on which she shrank back to the rector's side, as if for protection.

"It is shyness; he is too violent for her timid nature," he thought; but, when he looked on the firm expression of her little face, he was forced to add, "*not timid*, though, I think!"

Mr. Boyce by degrees subsided into acquiescence on the subject of disappointment about Mr. Vivian's settling near him, but repeated his invitations, which were, however, reasonably declined on the plea of the hopelessness of attaining his object. He thought he must now settle in the south, but he would visit Tredorvan again. He hoped his dear little pupil would remember his lessons, and work hard with her books. He was making a small cabinet of Cornish minerals for her.

Violet vibrated with emotion, and her usually pale face was overspread with a deep glow when Mr. Boyce read this to her; but she did not speak. From this time a change was perceptible in her. Young as she was, she enveloped herself in inaccessible reserve, and Mrs. Boyce was pained to feel that she no longer possessed her confidence nor her affection: something was brooding in that young mind more than could be disturbed or discovered.

#### THE RASCAL COLUMN IN THE NEWSPAPER.

For many years past it has been impossible to take up an English newspaper without encountering in some portion of its columns or other one or more advertisements which are nothing more or less than traps to plunder the unwary—unless when they are, as is sometimes the case, temptations to the wavering and infirm of principle to escape from anxiety by wrong-doing. The scamps who indite these advertisements make their living—and a very luxurious living, too, if all accounts be true—out of the embarrassed and struggling classes. They practise upon the nervous fears of the sick, the timid, and the unreflecting, or they lay their snares for the confirmed invalid, promising deliverance speedy and sure from diseases the most inveterate, to whomsoever is willing to accept it. In fact, there is no species of trouble to which mortals are subject but some advertising rogue is ready to make a profit out of it, and he can do so easily, because the newspaper is too often ready and willing to be the medium of his villany.

If we recollect right, the first of these scurvy professors of any note was a certain *soi-disant* retired physician, who, about ten years ago, used to claim the confidence of the public in the purity of his benevolence, on the plea that the "sands of his life were nearly run out," leaving you to infer that, standing as he did on the brink of the grave, he was incapable of deviating from the truth. All the venerable patriarch wanted was to spend his few remaining sands in affording relief to the suffering by imparting to them some wondrous discovery he had made in the healing art—for a consideration, of course: how could the moribund philanthropist afford to do it for nothing? What has become of that old sinner—"old Sands," as his victims learned to call him? His remaining sands dribbled on year after year, and that to a pretty profitable tune, for some five years at least, and then he gave up, not the ghost, but the game he had played so long, leaving that to a host of imitators, and betaking himself to a certain manufacturing town in the north. There, says our informant, instead of shuffling off his mortal coil, he executed a shuffle of a different kind: from a moribund philanthropist he became the N— Botanical Institution, for the cure of all intestinal diseases by means of a sovereign panacea discovered by an enterprising traveller in the impenetrable forests of South America. As an institution, he was no longer on the brink of the grave, but had grown young and vigorous; his philanthropy was now pure and unmixed; and he bestowed his panacea gratuitously upon all who chose to apply for it, enclosing stamped envelopes for its return by post. The reader will ask how upon earth he made the speculation pay? Well, the fact was, there was a singular property about the South American vegetable that rendered its preservation for any length of time impossible; and the consequence was that the institution found itself compelled, in order to maintain its efficiency as a specific, to extract its juices by a chemical process, and combining them with a fit medium, to manufacture the mass into pills. On applying by letter for a gratuitous supply of the famous vegetable, you were, by return, politely informed of the difficulty of keeping it, and of the fact that the institution had none then upon hand, though they were expecting a fresh consignment by the first vessel from the Plata: the pills, however, were at your service, but, as the labour attending the complex process of extracting and solidifying the juice was very great, they could not be sold without loss to the institution at less than four-and-sixpence the box. Of course, selling gamboge-pills (for they proved to be nothing more) at four-and-sixpence a box paid the rascal very well. The reader will scarcely need to be informed that the institution and the South American root, like the failing sands of life, were mere figures of speech.

This unscrupulous genius had a good many imitators—so many, indeed, that it is questionable whether it was not they who forced him into the remarkable transformation we have recorded. One of them had the impudence to style himself a retired clergyman: in that character he professed to be in possession of a sovereign remedy against all nervous diseases, stating in his advertisement that his sole motive for making it public was the hope of alleviating suffering, and that if any profit should accrue from the sale of the medicine, after paying all expenses, such profit would be devoted to a charitable purpose. A friend of the writer, a scientific man, took the trouble to procure some of this so-called remedy—it was in the form of pills, at half-a-crown the box—and submit it to careful analysis. The only ingredients they contained were rye-flour and soap.

We need not detail at length the various phases which this system of preying upon the sick and suffering was made to assume in the hands of the advertising scamps. A reference to a file of newspapers, be they new or old, will afford the reader all the information he can desire upon that score. He will see that there is no form of disease, however insidious or fatal its character, for which there is not an infallible cure to be had upon application to one or other of these rogues. Their modes of appeal to sufferers are almost as various as the diseases themselves, and some of them testify to an amount of ingenuity on the part of the writers which, applied to any honest purpose, would claim our admiration. Sometimes they advertise books or pamphlets, which are to be had for a nominal price, or even for nothing, but which, when obtained, give no other information than is contained in the address and magniloquent professions of the advertiser, backed by a bundle of imaginary "cases," either incapable of authentication at all, or falsely confirmed by knaves in the advertiser's pay. And sometimes they print long extracts from their own works, in which their wonderful cures are referred to in an accidental way, as though their reputation were universal and acknowledged on all hands. Simple-minded people read these long-winded puffs in perfect good faith, little dreaming that they are nothing more than refinements, ingenious and unscrupulous, upon the bare-faced and impudent lies of the quack pill-monger.

We will turn now to another squad of advertising rascals, not so prominent perhaps, or so transparent to the observer, who practise upon the poverty and pecuniary difficulties of a class unfortunately always very numerous in London, and presenting a very wide field for their experiments. These are the "Profitable Employment" dodgers. Knowing how many thousands of persons there are throughout the kingdom who are pinched in circumstances, who have families to maintain on insufficient means—how many there are who are cast out of work—how many who work for inadequate pay, and are eager for better remuneration;—knowing all this and much more, these rascals live by turning their knowledge to account. They have neither the means nor the intention to assist the struggling parties in the slightest degree; but by dint of reiterated and wholesale lying they can rob and plunder them, and fill their own pockets. They see their way to that plainly enough, because there are too many newspaper proprietors always ready to circulate their lies, at the charge of some sixpence a line, and send them on their mission of fraud and robbery throughout the land. Let us instance one or two cases which have come under our own observation. The widow of a professional man, left with a young family to maintain by her own exertions, saw in a morning paper an advertisement inviting "individuals in search of employment, either as a source of income or to fill up their leisure hours," to apply to the advertiser (enclosing a stamped envelope for reply), who would inform them of "means by which from two to four pounds a week might be realised, in town or country, and by either sex." The poor widow was but too eager to catch at this seeming deliverance from her chief trouble. She wrote at once, making the required enclosure, and in a day or two received an answer stating that the information she desired would be forwarded to her address on the receipt of a specified sum of money, which she might send in postage-stamps. This was not exactly what she had expected from the benevolent advertiser, but she reflected a little, and noting in the reply that the sum demanded was stated to be in payment of unavoidable expenses, she sent it without demur. She waited long and



anxiously for the precious document which was to lift her from indigence and fear of want to comparative competence and peace of mind. It did not come in a hurry, and when, after a week's delay, the long wished-for letter appeared, she had hardly courage to open it. When opened at length, there fell from the envelope a quarter sheet of demy paper, of the Seven Dials stamp, printed on both sides in Seven Dials type, and containing some fifty or more old receipts pillaged from the "varieties" page of one of the penny journals, or some such source. The "two to four pounds a week" were to be gained by compounding a wash for the complexion out of various ingredients to be bought at the chemist's, or by manufacturing a preparation for accelerating the growth of whiskers, the operator being instructed to simmer a certain quantity of beef-marrow on a slow fire in a small earthen vessel, together with definite proportions of olive oil, oil of rosemary, and oil of nutmeg. Or independence was to be won by boiling down treacle, sugar, and flour into toffee and hardbake; or by making a brilliant varnish for polishing furniture; or by mixing pomatums, tooth-powders, and lip-salves; or by doing fifty different things besides, none of which, had they been carried into execution, were likely to lead to anything but loss.

Another lady, the widow of an officer who died in India, finding her pension all too scanty to support and educate her daughters, was induced by an advertisement in the papers\* to apply to a so-called establishment which we shall call the "Mediæval Art Institute," the managers of which professed to be desirous of engaging the services of clever persons in multiplying copies in colours of antique designs of an ecclesiastical description. Applicants were to forward a specimen of their skill in copying, with a guinea for materials and a copy of the design to be reproduced. Together with the materials, the necessary instructions would be sent from the institute. On complying with the terms of the advertisement, the lady, who really drew with remarkable correctness, received a lithographed exemplar, a blank sheet of paper, and four small cakes of the colours required to be used. In a few days she sent back her copy with the exemplar, intimating that she would be glad to make any number of such copies on the terms mentioned. In return she received an assurance that, although her work was very promising, it was not quite up to the mark: a different exemplar was enclosed, which she was advised to try, as more suited to her style of drawing; and another guinea was demanded as the price of fresh materials and printed instructions. So plausible and so flattering were the terms of this communication, that she at once complied with it, and in a short time returned her second performance. The result was precisely the same—the same courteous strictures on her work, the same counsel to try again. And so the treacherous delusion was maintained until the eager aspirant had parted with six guineas from her scanty hoard, in return for which she had acquired a box of colours worth two-and-sixpence at the most, and her own rejected performances. Even then her eyes were only opened to the facts of the case by an accidental meeting with a friend, who had gone through the same miserable experience at the same hands.

A young fellow of our acquaintance, having come into a small property, and being anxious to marry, looked about for some secure business investment likely

to yield a comfortable living. By chance his eye fell upon an advertisement in the newspaper, offering the salary of £250 a year to a confidential clerk, with the prospect of a yearly rise. This struck him as the very thing, and he resolved to obtain the post if possible. He wrote to the advertiser, a Mr. B—, and met him by appointment at a coffee-house in the city. Mr. B—, with a somewhat authoritative air, looked him over from head to foot, and then in a hurried way, while apparently examining a lot of documents, began to question him on his qualifications. The young man's answers seemed to make a favourable impression; the questioner laid aside his documents and honoured him with an approving smile. Soon his talk became quite familiar; he made inquiries as to the young man's family; was pleased to hear he was connected with the P—s, of Dorsetshire, whom he had heard spoken of in terms of the highest respect; and expressed an ardent wish that they might suit each other. Still, as the post to be filled was a responsible one, he must not neglect to take every precaution: had the young man references to give, of whom he might make inquiries? Of course the references were given freely, and after a little further talk the two parted, a meeting three days after being first agreed upon, at a given hour, at B—'s office in Bishopsgate Street. At the appointed hour the meeting came off. B— met his "young friend" with a hearty greeting, and leading him through the office, where a couple of clerks and a boy were busy at their work, ushered him into a private room. There the young man learned that the testimony of his referees had been satisfactory, "indeed most gratifying." It now only remained for them to settle the terms of their agreement. These terms, which were ready drawn up, ought to have aroused the young man's suspicion, seeing that one of the items was the deposit of £300 by way of surety, by the confidential clerk, through whose hands large sums would have to pass. Unused to business, however, he suspected nothing, assumed that this condition was only, as B— termed it, the customary form, and drawing a cheque for the amount upon the bank where he had deposited his legacy, handed it to his employer; when, both having signed the agreement, of which each kept a copy, the transaction was concluded. The new clerk was introduced in form to those who would henceforth be his subordinates; the key of a handsome new desk was handed to him, which he was requested to put in his pocket. Then B— walked him off to a tavern and gave him a good dinner, only parting with him when the evening was far advanced. At parting he generously observed that, as his "young friend" was a comparative stranger in London, he might amuse himself for the next three days—it was then Wednesday—and need not enter on his duties until the coming Monday.

When that Monday came there were no duties to enter upon. The new confidential clerk tripped joyfully up the stairs at ten o'clock, and found the office closed. The boy and the junior clerks were waiting on the landing, and with them were two other young gentlemen, utter strangers to the new-comer. Hours passed away, and no one came to open the door. The housekeeper was applied to for the key, who reported that Mr. B— had been in the office to a late hour on Saturday, and had taken the key with him on departing. By-and-by the expectants began to wonder, then to grumble, and finally to give vent to the awful suspicions rising in their minds. As they became communicative the truth became manifest. The office, which had not been hired a month, did no business: the clerks were there to make

\* To the credit of some newspapers it must be said that they exclude a certain class of "medical" advertisements which disgrace the columns of low-class journals. But due care is not always taken with regard to other advertisements by which the credulous are robbed.

a show of it—that was all. The two strange gentlemen had both been engaged as the confidential clerk, one having deposited £150 and the other £250. B— was nothing less than an audacious swindler, who had netted £700 in all by his advertisement, and had, doubtless, long ere this, carried himself far beyond their reach.

There are in London at the present time over five hundred so-called loan societies, professing to lend money at five per cent., although the Bank rate may be ten, and although many of them are under obligations to pay the owners of the capital they employ twelve and a half per cent. for the use of it. How do these societies contrive to exist and make a profit? They advertise continually, they pay for placing their placards in thousands of shop-windows, and they must be at the expense of one or more managers, whose salaries cannot safely be very low. Not a few of them could exist only by rascality. The object, with a large proportion of them, is not to lend money at all, but to avoid lending it, and be paid for such avoidance. This desirable end is brought about by an ingenious system of fees and fines. When a poor fellow in difficulties applies for a loan of a few pounds, he has to pay the registration fee, say 1s., and the inquiry fee, which is according to the amount of the loan sought, but averaging over 5s. The applicant will, perhaps, give references to his own friends, among whom he wishes the inquiry to be made; but this does not suit the society, who make the inquiries where they choose, and who very often do not choose to make any inquiry at all, but pocket the fees and take no more trouble in the matter. When the applicant comes to see how his suit prospers, he is informed that his proposal is declined. Of course no money is returned, and there is an end of the transaction. When the society *does* choose to lend, the money advanced is payable by instalments, the first instalment being deducted on handing over the cash. The borrower, having given two or more sureties, who, by their signatures, agree to all the conditions of the loan, all three of them are equally responsible, and, in case of an instalment not being paid when it falls due, are also responsible for the fine then leviable for failure, and for the fee chargeable for the application. Among the poor struggling small traders who avail themselves of these loans, anything like business habits is the exception and not the rule; and it is not much to be wondered at if, at times, the payments exacted from them and their sureties, including fines, fees, interest, and instalments of capital, amount in the whole to double the sum lent them by the society. We know of an instance in which a journeyman borrowed £24, to be repaid at £2 a month, whose entire payments amounted at the end of the year to within a few shillings of £40. Thus, instead of five per cent., at which rate the society professed to lend, he had paid more than sixty per cent., and that, be it noted, for a period averaging only six months. Occasionally these loan-mongers prove to be on a level with the lowest and meanest scamps of the metropolis. Some time ago a gang of them, who had started a loan-office in the neighbourhood of Fetter Lane, quarrelled furiously among themselves. The result was a characteristic revelation made by one of them, and which was to the effect that the managers never had any capital to start with, that they could barely club enough to pay for placards and advertisements, and that they relied for capital upon the accumulation of the entrance-fees and charges for inquiry—inquiry under such circumstances being out of the question.

A kindred class of rogues to the loan-mongers are the advertising borrowers, who offer large sums for the

temporary use of money, under circumstances, as they profess, of peculiar exigency. Now it is twenty pounds offered for the use of ten pounds for a month; now the advertiser wants £100 for a week only, and will return the lender £150 at the expiration of the time. Offers still more liberal are sometimes made, and in all cases unexceptionable security is said to be forthcoming, so that the lender cannot possibly suffer loss. When such traps are investigated, it is generally found that the property which is to be the security for the loan is showy but worthless, and in some cases even does not belong to the borrower, but consists of something—it may be the lease of a shop or the deeds of a small estate, of which he has the temporary custody, and which he thus seeks to turn to his advantage.

A frequent form of advertisement is one addressed "To Persons in Difficulties," who have only to apply to the advertiser, and place themselves unreservedly in his hands, in order to be speedily extricated from all their troubles and responsibilities of a pecuniary kind, and set free to enter upon others as soon as they choose. The professors of this sort of philanthropy are familiar with all the shifts, tricks, and contrivances in use for whitewashing debtors and insolvents by means of the Bankruptcy Court. The client who commits himself to their care is withdrawn from society awhile in some pleasant retreat in the country, inaccessible by pestilent duns, and, at the right nick of time, is produced in the Court, and slipped through with an ease and celerity surprising to no one so much as himself, unless it be to the creditors, who are apt to find that assets which should have distributed among them some ten or twelve shillings in the pound, have dwindled, in the hands of Messrs. Pushemthrough, to a practical dividend of twopence-halfpenny.

The above examples may afford the reader some notion of the contents of the rascals' column in the newspaper. They are not by any means the worst examples that might be adduced: the worst, indeed, are of a character at which one can barely hint in these pages—enough to say that they are intended to meet the eye of unsuspecting and friendless females, and to be the instruments of their utter ruin.

The question naturally arises, Can nothing be done to put a stop to the promotion of all kinds of immoralities and villanies through newspaper agency? It seems to us reasonable enough that some sort of control might be established over the advertising columns, to prevent their being used for such monstrous purposes as we have pointed out. If newspaper proprietors will not exercise a censorship over advertisements, then an office for the purpose should be established, in which all advertisements not of a trading kind should be submitted for inspection, and only printed on receiving the censor's imprimatur, after due inquiry has been made in suspicious cases.

#### SOUTH AMERICAN BEEF.

BY J. K. LORD, F.Z.S.

I RECENTLY partook of a luncheon, the viands produced consisting entirely of fresh beef brought from South America. The fact of being fed, not to say feasted, at the London Tavern on beefsteaks, roasted ribs, rumpsteak pudding and pie, prepared from beef fresh as though just lassoed and killed on the Pampas, is something to boast of. Every dish prepared from this fresh beef was excellent and good of its kind—no taint, no bad flavour, tender, juicy, and nutritious as one could reasonably wish it to be. It will be interesting to glance briefly at the history



LASSING WILD CATTLE ON THE SOUTH AMERICAN PAMPAS.



of this valuable discovery; valuable because any process which holds out a fair hope of cheapening animal food, so that the poor may one and all obtain at least a daily ration, must be viewed as a stride, rather than as a step, in the right direction. I can honestly and truthfully say I ate and enjoyed this fresh beef, and, more than this, I brought a piece of it home uncooked, and the servants broiled it and pronounced it to be very superior to the beefsteak they had for their dinner. This, at any rate, was an unprejudiced opinion, for they did not know but what it had been bought at the butcher's shop.

Beef such as this can be retailed in London for 4d. per pound. The mode of preparation is at present a secret. It is brought home in tins hermetically sealed, several of which were opened in my presence, and the beef contained in them appeared in every respect as red, juicy, and devoid of taint as if but then cut from off a joint in Leadenhall Market.

The cost of the bullocks in South America was stated to be from 28s. to 35s. per head; but 15s. for the hide must be deducted from the first cost. The beasts average from six to eight hundredweight each, and there are over two million head procurable, if required. Mr. Paris, by whom the beef I tasted was prepared and put up in tins, stated that, in order to test the capability of beef prepared according to this new system, bearing a high tropical temperature, a quantity was prepared in London and taken out to Buenos Ayres. The magnates there were invited to a *déjeuner*, to partake of this beef, and they were quite delighted to taste a toothsome steak, fresh and savoury as if from Simpson's Grid-iron—beef, too, that had travelled through the tropics, all the way from the old country. Mr. Paris then tried his plan in South America, and cured a lot of beef for transmission to England; and we, in our turn, ate fresh South American beef at the London Tavern.

It will be remembered that, not a very long time ago, beef simply dried, called "charqui," was tried as a cheap food for the poor, and that the experiment signally failed. At present there are three systems in operation, and that too on a very extensive scale, in South America, for converting beef into a marketable commodity, capable of transport to any part of the world. As these processes are but little if at all known to the world at large, I propose giving an outline of the remaining two; one of them we have already glanced at, in the fresh beef system, not as yet fully developed into a commercial speculation.

The first process to be explained is that by which beef is salted. There are large establishments for the preparation of salted meat on the Uruguay and its tributaries. It would never pay to adopt our slow system of first cutting the meat into convenient-sized junks, and then either pickling or dry-salting them. The way it is managed wholesale is as follows:—By an ingenious mechanical apparatus a strong brine is injected through the blood-vessels of the newly-killed bullock. The injection is made by a tube passed into the aorta, or the main artery for supplying the body with blood. The carcass so treated is then skinned and cut up, and by the aid of hydraulic pressure packed into casks. A great deal of the beef prepared in this way is sent to Liverpool, and resold at from 4d. to 5d. per pound. By thus salting the carcass whole, the hide is preserved as well as the beef.

The next system in importance is that of making the "extractum carnis," or essence of beef—an invention of M. Liebig's. One establishment is on the banks of the Uruguay, and conducted on a most extensive scale. For

making this extract of flesh, it is requisite that the meat should hang a short time before it is used; hence the bullocks are slaughtered two days before the meat is required. When it has hung sufficiently long, it goes through a sequence of cylinders. This process pounds and mashes it into a regular paste. Water is next added, and in an immense caldron it is kept stewing until it is made into a rich soup. From this caldron the liquid is strained off into a much larger vessel, wherein it is kept at a simmering heat, so that all the fatty matter may be skimmed from off the surface. Then the broth goes into shallow evaporating vats, which are heated by steam pipes, and evaporation is further increased by causing a blast of air to play continuously over the surface of the liquid. Finally, the liquor is carefully strained, and further concentrated by stirring and steady boiling. When this has been continued the requisite time, the extract is finished, and ready to be soldered up in tin cases for exportation. It requires 33lbs. of flesh to make 1lb. of "extractum carnis." This is retailed in Germany, where it is in largest quantity consumed, at 12 francs per pound tin. In London at present it is sold at 16s. a pound.

At some of the "saladeros" the beef is simply sundried, and in that state is what is known as charqui. At some of these places 500 bullocks are often killed in a day. After skinning, the flesh is cut from off the bones, all the fat removed, and it is then exposed to the sun for some time. A little salt is now and again sprinkled over it, to assist in the preservation. This dried beef is principally consumed by the negro population in Brazil and elsewhere.

But you naturally ask—What becomes of the bones and tallow? The bones are thrown into gigantic vats, and steamed under high pressure. So intense is the heat produced, that the very marrow is extracted. This grease is barrelled up and sold at various markets; but the bones, having had their substance steamed out of them, are handed over to the fire, and consumed in the furnaces, affording the heat required to steam other bones, which will in their turn be likewise burnt. The ashes and the blood of the slaughtered beasts are, as a final process, mixed together and sold for manure.

Such is a hasty sketch of the several means at present in operation in South America for converting the inexhaustible quantity of beef—to be had there for a mere nothing—into useful human food, which can be conveyed to the remotest parts of the world without any risk of spoiling.

But, if the fresh-beef scheme can be made equally available on a large scale, and as successful in its results as we know it has been on a small scale, then not only the poor, but all, even to the wealthy and great, will have good reason to thank science for one of the grandest discoveries of modern times.

#### LASOING WILD CATTLE.

THE foregoing article having explained the various processes by which South American beef is prepared for the European market, the reader may be curious to know something about the cattle themselves, and the mode of their capture.

The enormous herds of wild and half-wild oxen that now roam over the South American continent have all descended from a parent stock of animals conveyed from Europe by the Spaniards. Some may probably imagine that, on the vast grasslands known under the Spanish appellation of "Llanos" or "Pampas," horned cattle are

bred pretty much as on our own pastures, only somewhat more plentifully and more economically. Such an idea would very imperfectly represent the true state of the case. One must picture to himself enormous grassy plains, hundreds of miles in extent, taken possession of, as we may say, by herds of wild horned cattle, and horses; for they, too, have made the most of opportunities afforded them, by the combination of fine climate with abundant fodder. Almost the only human beings who penetrate far into those grassy wilds are the gauchos, or herdsmen, as I will call them for the nonce. A gaucho is a sort of South American Arab; a man who mostly lives on horseback, and is never happy when fate or fortune may oblige him for a season to sleep under the roof of any civilised abode. The real Arab usually rides about armed with a long spear; the gaucho, you would say, perhaps, rode about wholly unarmed, the long knife you see being properly for butcher's work. You would make a great mistake. A mounted gaucho bears, as you see in the picture, a coil of unimportant-looking rope, one end of which is usually tied to his saddle. Wielded by experienced hands, the "lasso," as this rope-coil is called, becomes a fearful weapon of attack, not only against wild cattle, but mankind. The gaucho, swooping at a wild gallop over the grassy expanse, throws the fatal lasso, or noosed rope, with a degree of precision that, with very small license of speech, may be called unerring. A dexterous gaucho will tell you beforehand how he will catch a particular wild bullock; whether by one horn or two, whether by the neck, by this leg or that, he will be equally ready to oblige you. So inbred to the gaucho mind is the idea of catching things in a slip-knot, that these children of the grassy wastes noose the very partridges, not with the terrible lasso just described, but with a small running loop of horsehair, attached to a stick.

But for the lasso, and gauchos dexterous in using it, South American beef would not be so cheap as it is. To shoot the wild oxen would be more expensive than to lasso them, and perhaps not so sure. Moreover, against shooting, the obvious objection would lie of damaging the hide of horned cattle, often caught and killed with no other object than that of realising upon the hide and tallow.

### COUNTRY SPARROWS.

THERE was an amusing paper some time ago in the "Leisure Hour" about "London Sparrows" (No. 636). I do not see why my little feathered friends, the sparrows who live in the country, should not be introduced to the notice of the public as well as their town brethren; and, as I happen to have peculiar facilities for observing their habits and manners, I shall constitute myself their historian.

I live in a cottage, all the windows of which look to a pretty bit of garden, which in the season is more than usually full of roses, carnations, and other flowers. On the right and left are high walls—all too high for beauty, if they were not so richly clothed with jasmines, roses, passion flowers, and vines. These plants have become not only very attractive objects, but also afford all the year round shelter, and during a large part of it food, to various birds, the larger number of them sparrows. Under the thicknesses of the ivy and Virginia creeper, and amidst the long festooning branches of the roses, my little people build their nests, and feed and rear their young. They have also established themselves in the

corners of the roofs and below the chimney stacks of my own cottage, and also of three or four houses which are near at hand.

Contrary to custom, instead of waging war with the sparrows, I feed them diligently all the year round; and amply am I repaid for their rations of bread-crumbs, bits of soaked crust, and a little boiled rice or potato, by the droll scenes I witness, and the life and animation that the multitude of merry little creatures impart to my garden, as also in another way, of which I mean to speak presently. My sparrows dress beautifully, and their plumage is wonderfully varied in markings and colouring. The males differ a good deal in appearance, but not so much as the females, who assert the rights of their sex to variety in dress as much as any little birds alive. The males have all black caps and waistcoats, which, although the rest of their plumage is considerably varied, gives them a look of uniformity. But the ladies are free from any such regularity in their attire. They are exceedingly pretty. One or two of my young matrons have whitish bars across their wings. Some are so delicately pale in their general hue and so beautifully mottled in their plumage as to scarcely look like sparrows at all; whilst others are so richly freckled, spotted, and barred with a variety of browns and blacks that, but for the absence of cap and waistcoat, you would take them for male birds. They are all, however, of one species—the *Passer domesticus*.

Unlike their London brethren and sisters, the country sparrows are delicately neat and clean in their habits, and spend an immense amount of time in taking dust baths, by grovelling in my gravel path in the most laughable manner, half a dozen of them at a time grubbing, shaking their wings, rolling their heads, and quivering every feather down in the dust, and then sitting, and preening, and oiling their plumage by the hour together until they are quite little beauties.

The season from May to September is a very pleasant time with my sparrows. Pairing and nest-building begin often earlier than May, but seldom later, and then the air is alive with the busy little creatures. One year I made a great mistake. I was so much amused with seeing my birds carrying up scraps of matting, feathers, &c., to their nests that I scattered a quantity of scraps, chiefly of white and pink wadding, on the grass, and amongst the plants and shrubs, and the results were for the present time highly amusing, though, alas! fraught with danger for the future broods. Dozens of sparrows, male and female, came down even whilst I stood amongst the stores and carried off these "loan blankets," three or four at a time, until within a few minutes not a bit was left unappropriated. Not content with one piece, the saucy things would gather three or four—some of pink, and some of white—into their little bills at once, so that their loads, the material being light, looked nearly as large as themselves as they flew through the air, and speedily returned for more, leaving the mate to arrange the supplies in the nest. Sometimes the male bird was carrier and the female arranger, and at others it was managed on the contrary fashion, but both were steady workers; and it is interesting to see how completely the male and female of the sparrow share the whole of the work of building, incubation, and care of the young when hatched, and long after the little ones are fully fledged and able to feed themselves.

Pleased with my success, I scattered more and more building materials, and more and more were carried off by the builders, much to the amusement of myself and other watchers. Of course, I expected that, as I had observed the direction in which the materials were



carried, and so marked the position of an unusually large number of nests, I should in due time be visited by an unusual number of young birds, and accordingly watched for them, but in vain; for a lesson was given me on the folly of too lavishly aiding nature! From all my nests only two solitary young birds were produced. No doubt all the eggs had been overwhelmed or the young suffocated by the over-luxury that my care had provided, and in consequence my poor little friends had to bear the frustration of their hopes. They soon, however, set to work again, built new nests, and, not being overladen with charitable supplies, brought out as fine a flock of young birds as need be.

For a time, after the nest is finished, all is stillness; the parent birds sit on the eggs in turn, and all remains quiet. After due time has elapsed, little voices are heard, and the parents begin to carry food to the nests. Of the quantity of rice and other kinds of food I throw out for them almost the whole is carried away; scarcely a morsel is eaten "on the premises."

All the birds seem to hatch at about the same time, and both parents are incessantly passing to and from each nest, with their bills full of food as they go, and empty as they return. Then comes a change. The little people have got their feathers and can fly; and I see a couple appear, followed by one, two, three, or four little craving creatures, who follow papa and mamma about, with their bills wide open, and exhibiting remarkably wide yellow throats, quivering from head to foot with excitement, and uttering an incessant eager cry. If all is safe, the family, together with three or four other such parties, hop about on the turf, the parents gathering up grains of rice and scraps of bread, &c., and cramming them into the before-named yellow throats, until it becomes marvellous that such little bodies can hold so much; but if a cat is within sight, or a strange face visible, the little ones are generally ranged on a branch of a tree, each family apart, and there they sit whilst the parents fetch the food from below and feed them. If there is only one young bird from a nest, both father and mother feed that one little throat as sedulously and as fast as if they were putting their supplies into four. I watched one yesterday—a mother and her solitary little one. She first brought it to the feeding ground, where it was well fed, and also grubbed manfully on its own account. She then conducted it to a branch of a little apple-tree hard by, where it sat whilst she went backward and forward to it with mouthfuls of food. At first I did not count the numbers, but she must have carried up at least ten or twelve, and I was so struck by the enormous quantity that the tiny creature was disposing of that I began to count. I then counted fourteen mouthfuls more, each fetched at a separate journey from the ground, that the little one eagerly received, without any pause between them more than was necessary for the mother to fly down and back. My attention was then called off, but on looking back afterwards I saw that the same incessant feeding was still going on.

But, besides the amusement I derive from watching the birds, there is a direct benefit obtained for my garden from the encouragement I give them; for they are indefatigable consumers of the aphides and other kinds of blights, to say nothing of their consumption of caterpillars. It is highly interesting to see them *swarming* round and up and down the rose and fuchsia branches, and amongst the tall flower-stalks of the carnations, campanulas, etc., and collecting the "cuckoo-spit" blight, extracting the leaf-rotting caterpillars, or filling their bills with the aphides, which they carry off to the little ones who stand waiting round, or even to the nests.

They are very skilful in picking out the canker-worms from the buds of the moss roses, and look most graceful as they cling on to the slight stems of the buds, which bend under them, so that they have often to flutter off and lay hold on a fresh place. All kinds of caterpillars are their prey; and I have seen them eagerly and successfully hawking after moths and butterflies. A day or two since I saw one dash at one of the little crepuscule moths, which it had beaten up from the shrub on which it was resting. The moth evaded it twice, and made its escape, but was roused a third time and snapped up by the sparrow with eager delight. The consequence of my thus harbouring the sparrows is, therefore, good for my flowers. In seasons when my neighbours' roses are destroyed by green-fly and canker-worm, and their other plants devoured by caterpillars, my roses and carnations are in full luxuriance and abundance; and, during the whole of last summer, although I was at home all the year, and continually in my garden, I only saw two caterpillars there. The sparrows work the year through for me—winter and summer they are picking off something or other from the twigs or leaves, and, except in the hard frosts, seem to find supplies at all seasons.

The country sparrow has resources of its own for food, different from those of its London brothers and sisters it is true, but still somewhat analogous. If a cottage is new thatched, even in part, it is amusing to see the flocks of sparrows which cluster on the new reed to pick out the grains of corn which may by chance have been left in it, and the insects which hang about it. When the poultry-woman throws out her handfuls of barley, etc., for the chicken, or feeds her ducks with barleymeal, there flock the sparrows, a perfect host of them, hanging on the skirts of the regular feeders, and gathering up the odds and ends of seeds that have been mixed with the barley; and, although we have no "mews" or "cab-stands," there are plenty of private stable-yards for the sparrows to frequent.

The demeanour of the country sparrow is more modest than that of the London. They do not have it all so much their own way, for there are plenty of other birds to dispute with them and keep them in order. One thrush or blackbird will awe a whole company of sparrows. They feed together; but if the bigger bird for a moment assumes a bullying manner, and runs a step or two with his head thrust out, the whole flock of sparrows bustles off in the most ignoble manner, returning soon to the charge, but taking good care to keep as much in the rear of the enemy as is possible. But neither of these larger birds keeps such rule as the robin—he is a perfect tyrant amongst them. Once, in heavy snow, I found that all the food I threw out was soon buried, and therefore had a little wooden kennel with an arched entrance put out, and scattered the food in it. This proved very acceptable, until a robin appeared and took up his position in front of the house near the entrance, and there he stayed for hours, driving out every other bird that tried to enter, so monopolizing to his own use all the supplies provided for the whole starving community. The chaffinches, tom-tits, and other small birds fraternize with the sparrows very pleasantly.

I observe the same apparently unmeaning squabbles amongst our sparrows as are recorded by your correspondent of the London ones, as violent whilst they last, but as quickly ended; but, on the whole, there are no birds more orderly and harmonious in their lives than the little country sparrows. The perfect management of their little ones might be brought forward as a lesson to many a head of other *biped* families. If the parents place their little ones on a particular spot of ground, or

branch of tree, there they remain, if it is for an hour together, until they have leave to move; or, if one little mouth is open, and papa or mamma passes it by and puts the coveted mouthful of food into another little bill, the little one who has been passed over exhibits no sign of anger or even disappointment, but quietly waits until its turn to be fed comes round. There is much to be learnt from my little birds; and I consider it no waste of food to feed them, or of time to watch them, and observe how beautiful are the provisions that our God and Father has made for the well-being and happiness of all his different creatures, and how graciously he watches over them. We are told that "not even a sparrow falleth to the ground without his knowledge;" and when we see the happy lives of these pretty little creatures, the abundant supplies of food that are accorded them, and perceive that their consumption of this food is made a means of keeping down the excess of various tribes of destructive insects, and so of helping to preserve the just balance of animal and vegetable life, surely we must perceive that it is not only "the heavens" that "declare the glory of God," but that "all his works praise him," and that he is, indeed, "good to all, and his tender mercies over all his works."

*Tor, Torquay.*

P.

#### A VISIT TO PITCAIRN'S ISLAND.

THE following account of a recent visit to Pitcairn's Island is from a letter by a passenger on board the Panama and New Zealand mail steamship "Rakaia," Captain Wright, on her outward voyage to Wellington:—

On the 9th of November we sighted the little island of Pitcairn, so long the home of the mutineers of the "Bounty" and their descendants. Here they lived for twenty-five years before they were discovered, and, in spite of the acts of violence which marked the beginning of their career, became a most orderly, thriving, and well-conducted community; Adams, the principal leader of the mutineers,\* being magistrate and teacher. In the year 1856, the numbers having so much increased that the little island ceased to afford sufficient sustenance for all, the English Government gave them the old convict settlement Norfolk Island, and sent a man-of-war to remove them and all their goods. After a time, however, some of these simple, primitive people, longing for their old home, chartered a schooner and returned to take possession again of Pitcairn's Island.

About five o'clock in the evening we began to see distinctly the rugged hills and picturesque outline of the little island, forests of cocoanut-trees, with little cultivated patches here and there, and one cottage prettily situated on a hill looking towards the south-east. There was a heavy surf breaking on the rocky shore, and the hills rose so abruptly as to make a landing difficult. We approached within half a mile of the coast off Bounty Bay, the spot where the mutineers landed and burnt their ship, and presently observed a canoe coming off to us, manned by two sturdy fellows, who stepped on board with a basket of oranges. They were, of course, half-caste, speaking English tolerably

well, and clad in canvas trousers and coarse shirts. Their canoes were very slight, simply hollowed out of the stems of trees, and were worked skilfully with paddles by the men. Our visitors were most heartily received as they stepped on board, and there was a great deal of handshaking. We carried off the elder, a strapping young fellow of about twenty-two, to the captain, who explained to him where we had come from, and where we were bound; he knew very well the position of Panama, and, hearing we had left England only six weeks ago, at once asked "how was Queen Victoria," and seemed quite vexed that he had forgotten that it was the Prince of Wales's birthday. Our captain was anxious to make an arrangement with the islanders to bring off every month to the mail steamer, as soon as she comes in sight, fowls, vegetables, and fruit. We learnt from our visitor, whose name was Russell McCoy, and whose wife is the granddaughter of Young, one of the chief mutineers, that the principal productions of the island are yams, potatoes, bananas, pumpkins, sugar-cane, mangoes, and cocoanuts. They have also fowls, and twenty-six sheep, besides pigs and wild goats. McCoy did not ask for anything from the ship, but, being questioned about the wants of the islanders, he said they needed soap, cloth, tobacco, tea, and powder and shot. They occasionally receive a visit from a whaler, but had not seen a steamer since 1863, when a man-of-war touched. Whilst we were questioning McCoy, the crew had got hold of his companion, a little stumpy fellow, showing much more marked traces of native blood; he turned out to be a great grandson of Young, the mutineer. Presently we saw another canoe coming off with one man, who was Mr. Young, father of our friend, and who unites in his own person the offices of governor, magistrate, missionary, and schoolmaster; he is a tall, powerful man of about fifty, with a bronze complexion, and iron-gray hair; he was clad like the others, simply in canvas trousers and shirt. He told us that the island is now inhabited by nine families, making a total of fifty-three persons; each family has a farm, and mutual help is given in tilling the land—a matter of considerable labour, as they have neither horses, donkeys, nor oxen.

I don't know whether it was with a view to induce bachelors to remain that we were very soon informed that the community included three eligible unmarried young ladies.

The negotiation of business proceeded rather slowly, as it was necessary to explain everything to Governor Young in very simple language; and, as money would be of very little use to him, it was needful to ascertain the relative value of fowls and cloth, yams and tobacco, oranges and soap, &c. After about an hour's talk, however, these matters were arranged, and a contract signed by Captain Wright, engaging to take all the supplies the islanders bring off to the steamers on their arrival between the 4th and 10th of each month.

Young finds his office of magistrate no sinecure, and just now there appears to be a serious dispute about some land, which he is unable to settle, and wishes to refer to the Governor of New Zealand as arbitrator. Our visitors showed great anxiety for news, and eagerly carried off all the newspapers given to them, besides many books, though they asked for nothing except some stray numbers of periodicals, especially the "Sunday at Home." We rigged them out in coats, trousers, and hats, and the ladies sent dresses and ribbons to the women; they took, besides, supplies of soap, tea, jam, and tobacco; tea they value much, as they generally drink a decoction of sugar-cane as a substitute. One of our

\* In the "Sunday at Home," 1854, will be found an interesting account of the Mutiny of the Bounty, the settlement of the mutineers on Pitcairn's Island, and the transformation effected through the influence of a Bible discovered among the stores by John Adams. Since the visit of last November it has been stated in the newspapers that a coaling depot for the mail steamers between Panama, Wellington, and Sydney has been established at Oparo or Rapa Island, so that the chances of hearing reports from Pitcairn's Island will be less frequent. Oparo is in lat. 29.40 S., and long. 144 W. It is said to possess a fine harbour, and to be peopled by about five hundred friendly natives.

quartermasters had been to Norfolk Island, and had brought thence a photograph, which McCoy at once recognised as a likeness of his sister, now the wife of a descendant of Adams. He was delighted to become the possessor of this photograph.

As the day suddenly faded, and the shades of night were falling, our visitors went over the side, all their goods were handed into the frail canoes, and, as the "Rakaia" steamed off from Bounty Bay, we saw hats waving in acknowledgment of our three hearty cheers. The British ensign was flying on the point, and two lights appeared near it, no doubt to guide the canoes to the landing-place. We sent up blue lights and rockets as we steamed away into the darkness, on our way towards our still far-off destination.

It may be well to remind people at home that the opening of this line of steamers is a matter of no small moment in the history of ocean navigation. It is a triumph to have accomplished, not only with safety and regularity, but with comfort, a voyage of 6500 miles over a comparatively unknown sea; and there is a spice of adventure in a voyage in which our experienced captain deemed it needful to keep a double look-out in case some unknown island, or the breakers on a coral reef, should appear in our course.

The "Rakaia" has performed her voyage from Panama to Wellington, New Zealand, unbroken, except by the two hours' call at Pitcairn's Island, in twenty-eight days. The weather has been delightful, with the exception of a very few days, and the passengers have spent a pleasant month.

#### MODERN LONDON SIGNBOARDS.

THE signs in London have increased prodigiously in number since the setting in of the decline of signboards, and they amount at this moment, if the entire limits of the metropolis be embraced in the calculation, to little, if anything, short of five thousand—each and all of them, be it understood, representing some inn, tavern, gin-shop, beer-shop, or like place of entertainment, where spirits, wine, or beer, or all three, are dispensed to whosoever is willing to pay for them.

The first thing likely to strike any one who pays much attention to the signs of London is the characteristic fact that there are no other public institutions in the capital which are half so well known to the populace as are the public-houses and the designations they adopt; to hundreds of thousands these are the real landmarks, and to multitudes the only ones that have a place in their memory. Ask your way of a casual passer-by in any district with which you are unacquainted, and the chances are that he will indicate your route by the different inns and taverns which you will have to pass; he takes it for granted that you know them as well as he does, and that therefore they will guide you to your destination with unflinching accuracy. This is rather a suggestive fact, because it points to another fact more patent than it is pleasing; namely, that to the masses of the population the attractions of the publican exceed in fascination all that others have to offer.

We have no means of determining the proportion of signboards to signs in London at the present moment. The erection of new signboards is comparatively rare, while the opening of new public-houses under mere nominal signs is of daily occurrence; so that the relative proportion of signboards to signs must be constantly decreasing. Still, the landlords of old inns, whose signboards have long been familiar to the people, are seen to adhere to them tenaciously, and to have

them renewed with fresh paint and gilding from time to time; while now and then, in some suburb where a railway station disgorge its human freights twenty times a day, or where the omnibuses draw up and draw off continuously, we see a brand-new signboard mounted aloft and challenging notice by its abounding glare and glitter.

We may place, first, in our list of London signs those celebrated characters, historical or other, which the thirsty world delights to honour. Adam, of course, has the right of precedence, and he appears on sign or signboard in company with his wife, there being altogether a dozen of Adam and Eves, besides one Adam's Arms. There do not seem to be other antediluvian signs; but Noah's Ark, which has seven representatives, comes in to connect the world before the flood with the world after. Of royal personages there is no end, King David with his harp heading the list. Then comes King Alfred, and after him King Henry VIII, who is followed by a King George and a King William the Fourth. Of other sovereigns, including kings and queens on one sign, and kings' and queens' heads, there are some hundred and twenty in the whole, and above three-score Kings' Arms. Among the Queens, Queen Victoria has twenty signs (not a few of them with right royal signboards), while of other Queens, with Queen's Heads and Arms, there are no less than four-score. Connected with the heads of royalty there are three-score and more of crowns; and of crowns not connected with royalty, but with lumber and sundries of various descriptions, such as Anvils, Anchors, Apple Trees, Barley Mows, Tin Cans, Dolphins, Horse Shoes, Leeks, Sceptres, Shears, Shuttles, Sugar Loaves, Thistles, and Wool-packs, there are over fifty more—to say nothing of some fifty Roses, the rose always coming before the crown on the publican's sign. Princes are rather less abundant than sovereigns, there being near a hundred Princes in all, from forty to fifty of which are Princes of Wales; while of Princesses there are ten. Of royal things (not persons) there is an ample collection, running through most of the alphabet, from the Royal Cricketers to the Royal Yacht, and numbering more than we care to count.

Of other great personages, the Dukes amount to about four-score, nearly half being Dukes of Wellington; there are ten Earls; fifty-six Lords, two dozen of which are Lords Nelson; and thirty-seven Marquises, of whom about half are Marquises of Granby. Among the celebrities not of noble birth are Shakespeare, Sir Isaac Newton, Sir Sidney Smith, Van Tromp, Sir Walter Scott, Whittington, Sir Francis Burdett, Milton, Admiral Keppel, Lord Palmerston, and Mr. Gladstone, with semi-historical personages such as Falstaff and Robin Hood. Of what may be called trade signs there are an indefinite number, including the arms of every industrial profession, which, were they catalogued alphabetically, would begin with the Bricklayers' Arms, of which there are twenty-eight, and end with the Watermen's Arms, numbering fifteen.

The London signs taken from the animal kingdom are very numerous, and embrace certain specimens not to be found in any natural history index or collection. There are Antelopes, Bears, Bulls, Boars, Camels, Cocks, Cats, Dogs, Dolphins, Dragons, Eagles, Elephants, Fish, Falcons, Foxes, Geese, Goats, Griffins, Hounds, Hogs, Hares, Hens, Horses, Lambs, Lions, Magpies, Nags, Nags' Heads, Pigs, Peacocks, Pheasants, Porcupines, Rams, Ravens, Roebucks, Swans, Tigers, and Unicorns. Many of them, moreover, indulge in a variety of colours never heard of in nature; thus, some of the Pigs are



blue, several of the Lions are black, several red, and several white, and so on. Again, not a few of the animals have strange associates; thus, the Cock consorts with Neptune, the Lion takes up with a French Horn, the Goat puts on Boots, Chanticleer crows over a Bottle, and the Magpie makes friends with the Punch Bowl.

The numerals from one to ten figure in a good many signs in connection with various objects. There is the One Tun, the One Swan, the Two Bells, the Two Brewers, and various other couples; the Three Cups, the Three Neals' Tongues, and near a score of other triads—three being evidently a favourite number. Of fours there is but one—the Four Swans in Bishopsgate Street; of fives there are plenty, one being the odd conjunction of Five Bells and a Bladebone; of six there are but two—the Six Bells and the Six Cans and Punch-bowl; of sevens there are just seven, six of them being the Seven Stars; there are four Eight Bells, one Nine Elms, and one Ten Bells.

There are a good many "jolly" signs—among them the Jolly Gardeners, the Jolly Anglers, the Jolly Farmers, the Jolly Sailors, and the Jolly Watermen—whose jollity, we may assume, is kept in countenance by a certain Tippling Philosopher, who does not disdain to figure on a sign.

Among the vegetables and fruits we have Artichokes, Apple-trees, Cherry-trees, Grapes, Mulberry-trees, Orange-trees, Pine-apples, and Vines.

The most thirsty colours, judging from their comparative prevalence, are White, Red, and Black, there being upwards of two hundred of the first, principally White Harts and White Horses; a hundred and ten of the second, chiefly Red Lions; and nearly a hundred of the third, mostly Black Bulls and Horses. Other absorbent hues are blues and greens, the last associated principally with Dragons.

Of agricultural implements we have the Plough, the Shovel, the Harrow, the Cart (and Horse), and the Waggon.

Among maritime signs are fourscore ships in all stages, from a Ship on the Stocks to a Ship on the Rocks, and from a Launch to a Sheer-hulk; and there are also Anchors in plenty.

The Bible, either singly or in combination, was formerly a favourite sign of the booksellers; and Messrs. Rivington, when they removed westwards from Paternoster Row, carried with them the painted and gilt carving of their ancient badge, the Bible and Crown. Twenty years ago there was a tavern in Shire Lane, a house of call for printers, bearing the sign of the Bible, but we are not aware of any house with that title at present existing.

Occasionally in our rambles through the streets we come across mysterious signs not easily understood. One such is the Hole in the Wall. This sign, according to Messrs. Larwood and Hotten, "is believed to have originated from the hole made in the wall of the debtors' or other prison, through which the poor prisoners received the money, broken meat, or other donations of the charitably inclined. The old sign of the Hole in the Wall shows an opening in a square piece of brick-work. Generally it is believed to refer to some snug corner, perhaps near the town walls; but at the old public-house in Chancery Lane the legend is as here given. Hard by, in Cursitor Street, prisoners for debt found a temporary lodging up to a recent date." Another puzzling sign is "Grave Maurice," which, according to the above-named writers, may mean Graaf (Count) Maurice, afterwards Prince of Orange, who was popular

in this country in Elizabeth's time, on account of his successful opposition to the Spanish domination in the Netherlands. He is called *Grave Maurice* in Baker's Chronicle of the year 1612. The sign is one of very old standing in London, being mentioned by Taylor, the water-poet, in 1636. The "Goat in Boots" is also doubtless a puzzle to many. This has been supposed to be a corruption from *der Goden Boods* (the messenger of the gods), the legend of a Dutch sign bearing the figure of Mercury. It is more likely, however, as the above-named writers suggest, to "be a sort of caricature of a Welshman, the goat having always been considered the emblem of that nation, and the jack-boots an indispensable article of Taffy's costume." No less a mystery to many would be the Cat and Bagpipes; but this is susceptible of a very simple explanation: the fact is that it is but an Irish paraphrase of the Cat and Fiddle. Some Hibernian Boniface, incapable of appreciating the recondite connection between a cat and a fiddle, which we have pointed out in a previous paper, in adopting the sign for his house absurdly blotted out the fiddle and replaced it by the bagpipes, because they were his national instrument. Many more mysteries there are upon London signs, which, even had we the ability, we have not now the space to treat of. The reader will remember, however, what we have explained to him before, that a good part of them are to be accounted for from the practice of quartering signs, which brought all sorts of incongruous things in juxtaposition.

In bidding adieu to the subject we may point attention to the fact that, of late years, there seems to have been a rather strong inclination on the part of certain shopkeepers to have recourse once more to that positive style of demonstration which a century or two back plunged the streets of London into shadow. This inclination manifests itself in various ways, but always with one and the same object—that of achieving notoriety and distinction. Thus, one man paints his house a fiery-red from top to bottom, not exempting even the chimneys and the chimney-pots; another decorates every square foot of his frontage with cheques in black and white; a third will paint every brick tricolour-fashion, in alternations of red, white, and blue; a fourth, who sells mourning and "performs" funerals, not only covers his entire front with deep inky black, but also sports black window-blinds drawn down at all the windows, and takes a pride in figuring as a huge blot in the gay street. Akin to these are demonstrations of a still more positive sort—as when a poulterer at Christmas time feathers his whole house from garret to basement with dead fowls and game, till it looks as though it was going to fly away bodily; or when a slopseller at any time makes a perpendicular Monmouth Street of his house-front by draping it alow and aloft with paletots, wrap-rascals, and pantaloons; or when a furniture-dealer blockades himself, and his neighbours too, with chairs and tables, side-boards and sofas, carpets and bedding, as though a cascade of household stuff were streaming from his roof battlements. Some notable instances of this kind have latterly astonished the public; and it seems not unlikely that by-and-by what is now the exception may become the rule; so that every shopkeeper who cares to be on a level with his neighbours will have to turn his house out of windows whenever the weather will admit. For our part we must say we should prefer a return to the primitive signboards, provided always that they were limited to the house-fronts; and indeed if they were painted so as to do no discredit to the state of Art in England at the present time, they might be ornaments to our commercial highways.

## Varieties.

**COMETS AND METEORS.**—In No. 794 of the "Leisure Hour" attention is drawn to a most extraordinary coincidence between the orbit of the *August* ring of meteors and that of Comet II of 1862, from which M. Schiaparelli has inferred that an intimate connection exists between comets and meteors, each originating from the same source. Since that paragraph was written, Dr. Peters, of Altona, has pointed out the remarkable fact that the orbit of the *November* ring of meteors, computed by M. Schiaparelli from the observations of the great display of last year, is almost identical with the orbit of Comet I of 1866. There must be something more than accident in these two coincidences, for the agreement, in both instances, in the different elements of the orbits is really startling. There is every appearance at present that M. Schiaparelli's speculations on this subject will rank amongst the most celebrated of recent astronomical discoveries. M. Le Verrier, of Paris, has also published some remarks on the probable origin of meteors; his hypothesis, however, does not differ much from that of M. Schiaparelli. Whether it may be found ultimately that these speculations are or are not borne out by future investigations, we have no hesitation in again remarking that the two coincidences which have been mentioned are "the most remarkable which we have had in astronomy for a considerable period."—*N. D., Greenwich.*

**BIBLICAL MUSEUM.**—Under the auspices of the Committee of the Palestine Exploration Fund, a Museum is to be formed at South Kensington for the exhibition of such articles as will tend to illustrate the Bible. Coins, pictures, sculptures, photographs of historical scenes, plans and maps, specimens of natural history, vegetable and mineral products, will be among the objects in the collection.

**MAY-DAY SPORTS OF KING HENRY VIII.**—King Henry VIII (according to Edward Hall), in the seventh year of his reign, on May-day morning, with Queen Catherine, and many lords and ladies, rode a-Maying from Greenwich to Shooter's Hill, where, as they passed, they saw a company of tall yeomen all in green, with green hoods, bows, and arrows; their chieftain was called Robin Hood, who desired the king to stay and see his merry men shoot. The king consented, and Robin Hood, whistling, all his 200 archers shot off. The shafts were so contrived in the head that they whistled when discharged, so that the strange loud noise greatly delighted the royal company. Moreover, Robin bade the king and queen to enter the woods, where, in arbours of boughs decked with flowers, they were served plentifully with venison and wine, to their great content.

**COFFIN FURNITURE COST.**—The pauper reposes in a coffin the mountings of which cost little more than 4d. a set. The well-to-do citizen demands adornments to the value of 8s. or 10s., while your landed gentleman or church dignitary carries mountings with him to his brick grave or family vault to the value of £5 or £6 sterling. More expensive varieties of mounting are made of Britannia metal or brass, occasionally electroplated or gilt. In these the plates are cut out of sheet or Britannia metal, or sheet brass hammered, the handles being also of brass. Occasionally a set of coffin furniture is executed in bright brass, in the mediæval style, with the shield emblazoned, &c., at a cost of from £20 to £25.

**PRINTERS AND COMPOSITORS.**—"The printer is generally sensitive, and far from robust, and is liable to bronchitis, fatigue, and exhaustion; his greatest foe is consumption. Dr. Edward Smith stated in his report that in 100 readers there were 2-75 weeks of sickness yearly per man, and in 10 years 2-3 weeks a year; the yearly mortality among them was 1 in 44, and the average age at death 45 years. Comparing the mortality among printers with the death-rate among agricultural labourers, it was found that between the ages of 35 to 45 among printers it was 1-747, among agricultural labourers 0-805; and between 45 to 55 among printers it was 2-367, among agricultural labourers 1-145. The mortality among compositors from consumption was double that of the whole country; viz., 70 per cent. of the whole, against 48 per cent. It cannot be said that the printer is irregular in his habits. Taking printers as a class, they are rather abstemious than otherwise; and if pressmen, whose muscular exertion is greater, are given, together with more food, to a little more drinking, it is pleasing to find that not a few of them are teetotallers, their experience and the lesson of their very life showing that the duties of the pressman can be as easily and efficiently performed by a teetotaler as by the drinker. Printers have charities of

their own worthy of every support. These of London have their Printers' Pension, with an annual income of nearly £2000, with which they give handsome pensions to 273 of their disabled members or their friends. They have almshouses also, and recently they have established a Printers' Orphan Asylum. The work of the printer is very arduous, and, as we have seen, most fatal to life. At a meeting for promoting this last benevolent effort, Mr. Charles Reed, the excellent chairman, said: "Printers, to use a phrase well understood amongst themselves, at the best have had 'hard lines' of it. There was a work which brings into play, not the skilled labour of the hand alone, but the high faculties of the mind; their work was not a work of the day only, but they were found toiling at the midnight hour, and often into the small hours of the morning, to gratify the public taste, and to elevate the intellectual and moral standard of the entire community. In doing this, they expended the bone, the muscle, and the fibre of the physical frame; and they drew so largely upon their mental powers that they almost necessarily reduced the amount of vital energy, and rendered themselves more assailable by distemper and disease, falling victims often at an early period of life to the labour they had undergone. This being so, their widows and children are frequently left in a state of difficulty and distress, and they look round in vain for help unless the claim is recognised by their own class."—*Professor Leone Levi.*

**ADULTERATION OF COFFEE.**—On the equalisation of the rates of duty on coffee and chicory, it was thought that the imposition practised upon the public by the general sale of adulterated coffee would be in a great degree checked; and, so far as relates to the illicit selling of mixtures of coffee and chicory, the adjustment of the duties referred to has produced the contemplated effect. The unscrupulous portion of the dealers in coffee, however, finding that an unlawful profit could no longer be obtained by the sale of chicory, have resorted to the use of another article, much better suited for the adulteration of coffee than even chicory itself, and one which was surreptitiously used many years ago, and through which (says the principal of the Laboratory of the Inland Revenue) I have reason to know the success of more than one of the now-called "eminent" firms in the coffee trade was established. The adulterant is known in the trade as "finings;" but it is simply burnt sugar or caramel, and has only about one-third the value of duty-paid coffee. Exertions are being made to protect both the revenue and the public against the fraud in question, and many coffee dealers have, during the past year, been convicted, and paid heavy penalties. Within the year ending on the 31st of March, 1866, one hundred and forty-six samples of coffee were examined at the Laboratory of the Inland Revenue, twenty of which were adulterated with caramel to an extent ranging from one to eight per cent.—*Report of the Principal of the Laboratory of Inland Revenue, appended to the Tenth Report of the Commissioners.*

**ARCHBISHOP OF DUBLIN.**—Referring to Dr. Pusey's "Eirenicon," Dr. Trench in his last Charge says, "How impossible it is to conceive that for three centuries the conflict between the Roman theology and our own should have exercised the keenest and mightiest intellects in Christendom—many among them yearning for peace as, next to truth, God's dearest blessing to his Church—and yet none discovered that it was, after all, but a strife about words which was keeping us estranged from one another. But is it such a strife about words? Our Sixth Article, that Holy Scripture containeth all things necessary to salvation, and the decree of the Council of Trent, that Scripture and tradition are two co-ordinate sources of doctrine, the one having equal authority with the other, will any reconciling skill ever make these to say the same thing? Or, again, does not our Ninth, on the nature of Adam's sin and on the consequences which it entailed on him and on his posterity, apprehend the corruption of our fallen nature in a manner very different and very far more earnest than that in which it is apprehended by the Church of Rome, which has never thoroughly cleansed itself from the leaven of that Pelagianism which in words it condemns? Again, in the matter of the grounds of our acceptance with God, the decree of the Council of Trent on Justification is, all things considered, a marvel of theological skill; but, nearly as it approaches the truth, it is not the doctrine of our Eleventh Article—which doctrine, indeed, the Council expressly anathematizes and condemns."